# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# assistant secretary for health, Department of health and human services

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | * Health, Education, Labor and Pensions |
| Agency Mission | To enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans by providing effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health and social services |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for health oversees the offices within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health with the goal of fostering collaboration across its programs to advance public health. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Health and Human Services |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health had a fiscal 2015 budget of $280.486 million (budget outlays), and has 256 employees.[[2]](#endnote-2) The assistant secretary for health oversees 12 core public health offices, including the Office of the Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, as well as 10 regional health offices across the nation and 10 presidential and secretarial advisory committees.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Leads the effort to develop policy recommendations related to public health issues that cut across HHS agencies and operating divisions[[4]](#endnote-4) * Coordinates an array of interdisciplinary programs relating to: * Disease prevention * Health promotion * Reduction of health disparities * Women’s and minority health * Adolescent health * HIV/AIDS and chronic infectious diseases * Vaccine programs * Fitness, sports and nutrition * Bioethics * Population affairs * Blood supply * Research integrity and human research protections |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Background in public health * Some management experience * Background as a physician or in epidemiology (preferred) |
| Competencies | * Ability to supervise a diverse group of people who have a range of skills * Ability to form relationships with external stakeholders * Strong communication and interpersonal skills * Excellent leadership skills * Ability to handle sensitive matters * Excellent negotiation skills * Ability to work in a matrixed agency |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Karen B. DeSalvo (2014 to 2017) (Acting) – National Coordinator for Health Information Technology; Health Commissioner for the City of New Orleans; Vice Dean Community Affairs and Health Policy[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Howard K. Koh (2009 to 2014) – Associate Dean for Public Health and Director of the Harvard School of Public Health Center for Public Health Preparedness; Commissioner of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Joxel Garcia (2008 to 2009) – Senior Vice President and Senior Medical Advisor at MAXIMUS Federal Services Inc.; Deputy Director of the Pan American Health Organization for the World Health Organization; Commissioner of Public Health for Connecticut.[[7]](#endnote-7) | |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Leadership Directories: https://lo.bvdep.com/OrgDocument.asp?OrgId=-1&LDIBookId=19&LDIOrgId=152980&LDISecId=180&FromRecent=1&Save=0#O152980 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.hhs.gov/ash/about-ash/index.html# [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.hhs.gov/ash/about-ash/index.html# [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.hhs.gov/about/leadership/karen-desalvo/index.html [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/howard-koh/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.neomed.edu/pipeline-to-practice/conference-home/speakers/garcia [↑](#endnote-ref-7)